



Natural Resources Conservation Service
6013 Lakeside Blvd.
Indianapolis, IN 46278

April 19, 2006

INDIANA BULLETIN NO. IN 300-6-14

SUBJECT: LTP- Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) Crop Base Certification and Geographic Cap Offer to Landowner

Purpose: To provide notification on crop base certification and information on geographic cap offer to landowner

Expiration Date: September 30, 2006

In regard to the Wetlands Reserve Program for Fiscal Year 2006, National Headquarters has implemented a new process to complete appraisals. This process was identified in Indiana Bulletin 300-6-8 dated February 3, 2006. Crop bases on lands being enrolled into WRP have to be addressed in order to insure that the base is considered as part of the appraisal process. National Headquarters has provided Attachment 1 (Wetlands Reserve Program Landowner Certification) as a form to be used to indicate that the landowner has adequately addressed the crop base issue. Completion of this form is required before a WRP appraisal can be ordered. The form should be submitted as a part of the appraisal request packet to Judith Weber, Contracting Officer. Some counties have already submitted a Farm Services Agency Form 505, Voluntary Permanent Direct and Counter-Cyclical Program (DCP) Base Acres Reduction to Ms. Weber and the WRP Landowner Certification is not required in those instances. For all other instances in which District Conservationists have been notified that appraisal information is needed, the WRP Landowner Certification should be completed.

National Headquarters has indicated that WRP funds must be obligated by June 1, 2006. WRP obligation of funds occurs when an option agreement (offer of easement value) has been submitted to the landowner and signed. The new appraisal process requires that appraisers meet certain training qualifications before they can do any WRP appraisals. Many of the courses needed to meet the qualification requirement were not available until this spring, thus making it impossible to meet the obligation deadline of June 1, 2006. This problem is occurring on a nationwide basis. In order to meet the obligation deadline, National Headquarters has indicated that offers can be made to landowners based on the county geographic cap and once an appraisal has been completed an amended offer will be made (assuming that the appraisal is less than the geographic cap). Attachment 2 is the letter prepared by National Headquarters and approved by the Office of General Counsel. This letter will be sent out in the near future to landowners with 2006 funded applications in which an offer has not yet been made. At this time, the process will affect 14 landowners representing 10 different counties. Gerald Roach, WRP Coordinator, will contact each District Conservationist in these counties to discuss. We will have appraisers in

place to complete appraisal work this summer. Once we have appraisers set up to do the work we will not use this process (offer based on geographic cap) to obligate funds.

If you have questions concerning the Wetlands Reserve Program, please contact Dwayne Howard, Assistant State Conservationist for Programs at (800) 440-7536, ext. 386 or Gerald Roach, WRP Coordinator, at the Scottsburg Field Office at (812) 752-2269, ext. 3.

/s/

J. XAVIER MONTOYA
Acting State Conservationist

Attachments

cc: USFWS, Bloomington, IN